Moon Girl and Devil Dinosaur Season 2 Part 1 Spoiler-Filled Review

Moon Girl and Devil Dinosaur, also called *Marvel's Moon Girl and Devil Dinosaur or Moon Girl,* is an animated superhero adventure series created by Laurence Fishburne and Helen Sugland. It's based on the 2010s Marvel Comics series, Moon Girl, and by Brandon Montclare, Amy Reeder, and Natacha Bustos. The first season aired from February 10, 2023 to May 6, 2023 on the Disney Channel.

This first part of season two, which dropped on February 3 on Disney+, and aired from February 2nd to March 16 of this year on the Disney Channel, had many darker themes than the first season. This began with the first episode. Lunella Lafayette (voiced by Diamond White) went through an interdimensional gateway and asked the Beyonder (voiced by Fishburne) for help. However, once they get there, his powers won't work. They get beat up by someone and come across alternate versions of Lunella and Devil Dinosaur called Devil Girl and Moon Dinosaur. Alt-Lunella wants to *kill* the Beyonder.

The episode sets the groundwork for season, with Lunella almost killed by Molecule Man (voiced by Edward James Olmos) while a rad fighting song plays. Although the Beyonder gets the wand of Molecule Man and traps him, she believes that she can't do anything by herself as a result.

Beyonder allows her to escape. Despite the fact that Mimi Lafayette (voiced by Alfre Woodard), her friend Casey "Case" Calderon (voiced by Libe Barer), and Devil Dinosaur (voiced by Fred Tatasciore) happily greet her, she is hiding something: trauma from almost dying. This is compounded by the fact she was only gone for days after days for her, but only two hours in the human world! This trauma sticks with her throughout the season.

In the episodes that follow, she still deals with her trauma. She thinks back to what happened while watching a movie with her family, and loses it. Mimi tries to encourage Lunella to reveal her secret identity. Lunella says she will if Mimi reveals she is the original Moon Girl herself. Later, she helps give her a new supersuit and goes to a camp of sorts, but without Case. Even though Lunella keeps having flashbacks, she is helped by Merle and Matsuye. They're a lesbian couple voiced by Jackée Harry and Ann Harada respectfully. Both are friends of Mimi and are tech-savvy. She's told by Mimi that she doesn't need an invincible suit and that her brain makes her "unstoppable."

While it could be said that her trauma was dealt with too quickly, it is possible that the writers couldn't do everything they wanted. They only had limited space to work with, and could have wanted to avoid the entire season comprised of Lunella dealing with her trauma. It's also possible these writers were portraying the fact that Lunella pushed down her trauma, building upon horrifying events in season one, like her believing (for a time) that Marris killed Devil, after he destroyed her underground lab. In any case, this lack of focus on trauma differentiates it from torment experienced by Korra in *Legend of Korra*, the pain experienced by Princess Bean in *Disenchantment*, traumatized Ash Graven in *Final Space*, irreparable trauma experienced by Cassandra in *Rapunzel's Tangled Adventure*, or Adora and Catra feeling broken and unworthy at different points in *She-Ra and the Princesses of Power*.

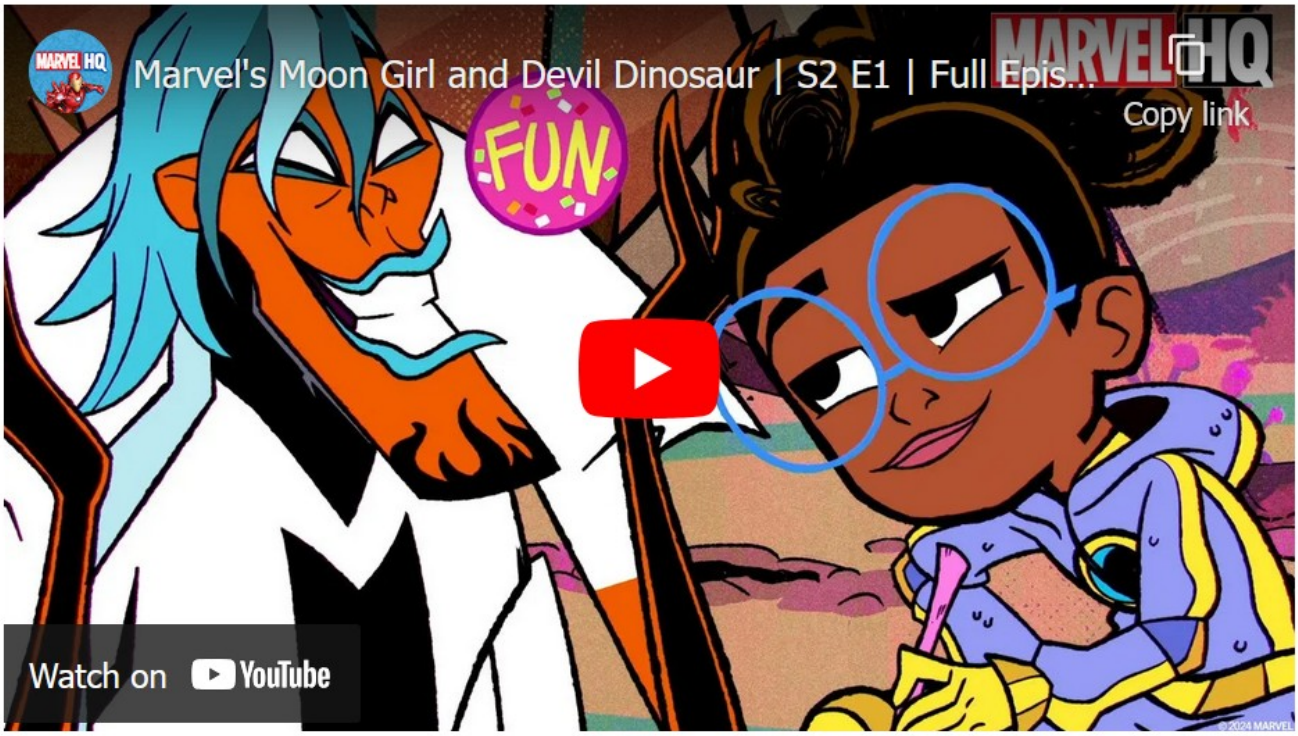
The first season focuses on the role of family (for Lunella especially), had superb animation quality, an impressive cast, tones of comedy, music, and action, including the "playful" villain named the Beyonder. Also representation was central to the storyline, whether with Lunella's Black family, Case's Latina (and Jewish) family, a Black-majority main cast, outward LGBTQ+ representation, and social commentary (like on racism), all with a relatable roller-skating protagonist. In my review, at the time, I made comparisons to *RWBY*, *Karma's World*, *Steven Universe Future*, *Cleopatra in Space*, *Futurama*, *I've Been Killing Slimes for 300 Years and Maxed Out My Level*, *Birdie Wing*, and *City of Ghosts*. I noted that *Moon Girl* remains a shining example of a recent animation which can be enjoyed by all even though it is primarily aimed at children.

This season goes to darker places. There's fissures between Lunella and Case, and Lunella dismissing the Beyonder out of hand (and feelings bad about doing so). There are also plotlines like freeing Devil before he gets destroyed by a goo grenade, dangers of fads, or Lunella starting a program reminiscent of those for ex-cons. It helps reformed villains get back on their feet like QuickWhip / Zakiya (voiced by Robin Thede). One of the best additions is Kid Kree (voiced by Xolo Maridueña). He works on behalf of the Kree Empire, and begins as a supervillain. He loves math and science and keeps in contact with Lunella. As a result, she feels less alone in the universe, especially since Kree is the third person, other than Mimi and Case to know that she's Moon Girl.

One of the strongest episodes is the seventh one. Lunella realizes that she is enough. She pushes away her bad thoughts, hoisted on her by science teacher Akonam Ojo (voiced by Cynthia Erivo) from Wakanda. Throughout the episode, Ojo claims that her work isn't refined or inspired enough, is too rudimentary, incomplete, and keeps shooting down Lu's ideas. As a result, she implies that Lunella herself is a failure! This is one of the first series which shows a character experiencing a panic attack. Ojo apologizes for what she did and says she was mentored that away and will do better in the future.

Later episodes involve Lunella going on a road trip with her family, Devil finding a sidekick-support group, and stopping a woman named Kat Swan (voiced by Parker Posey) who tries to brainwash dogs to do her bidding. In the process, Lunella reveals she knows her Black history, including that of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr. The importance of self-love and partnership between a superhero and sidekick is emphasized. There's an allusion to what will happen when she reveals she is Moon Girl to her family. Her grandpa, James "Pops" Lafayette Sr. (voiced by Gary Anthony Williams), tells her "when you really care about someone, you want to love them for all of who they are. No secrets." His response gives Lunella confidence he will accept her as Moon Girl.

The tenth episode has a different tone. It has similar vibes to heists in *Carmen Sandiego* episodes or scenes in the two *Doctor Aphra* comic book series. Lunella and her classmates successfully switch out a powerful crystal with a fake and foil the machinations of the strict, suspicious, and kid-hating museum guide, Doctor Stern (voiced by Peter Weller). All the while, Kree and Lunella begin to have romantic crushes on one another.



Watch here: https://youtu.be/_TtLamFDkbY

The eleventh episode gets into more family squabbles, as Lunella puts up posters, as Moon Girl, advertising a roller jam at her family's roller rink, called Roll with It. She is challenged by a beefy guy named Brian Glory (voiced by Manny Jacinto) to a roller challenge and she turns him down. Her dad, James Lafayette Jr. (voiced by Jermaine Flower), meets his former best friend and roller skating partner, Vernell Lewis (voiced by Arsenio Hall). Both like Moon Girl. They explain how they opened their own roller rink because they were excluded from elsewhere because of their skin color. In episode's pinnacle, Lunella (as Moon Girl) declares that the biggest threat to roller rinks is corporations and landlords, not "from our own grandfathers." They all work together to battle Brian, who has become Blue Streak, and defeat him.

This episode, as much as others, directly criticizes racism, not shying away from it as a reality for Black Americans. It is just as impactful as the December 2000 *Static Shock* episode "Sons of the Fathers," where the Virgil's father, Mr. Hawkins, tells Mr. Foley he has to put his racial prejudice aside so they can save Richie (Foley's son and Virgil's friend). By the end, he resolves to change his ways and confront his racism going forward. *The Proud Family* had episodes with similar themes through its run.

The twelfth episode expands the romantic themes between Lunella and Kree. Both dance together but agree to remain friends. Eduardo (who likes Lunella) feuds with Kree. There's even a fun scene Casey encourages people to begin a dance fight to help Lunella and Kree who are fighting the mothmen. This is the same episode in which Lunella feels low about the difficulties of life and has Devil there to comfort her. The episode afterward sets the groundwork for the last-aired episode to-date. In the episode, Lunella's tension with her parents (and family at-large) reaches a fever-pitch. She meets Turbo (voiced by Erika Ishii) who tells her that when she hid her secret identity she got in arguments with her mother and their relationship permanently ended.

After she helps Turbo fight Silvermane (trapping him a stuffed bear), Lunella begins to tell her family the truth she has been holding in for so long: that she is Moon Girl. This concludes in the fourteenth episode. Her mother Adria Lafayette (voiced by Sasheer Zamata) is unsure what to think. Her dad goes on an emotional rollercoaster and her grandpa is accepting. Mimi's revelation that she knew about this makes Lunella's mother angry. Of course, right after Lunella's mom says this is a lot to take in and Lunella says they are safe, Molecule Man pops out of nowhere. He tracked her to Earth because she left behind part of her stealth suit.

Lunella desperately thinks of how to fight back. Mimi helps her to the chagrin of her dad, grandpa, and mother. If this isn't bad enough, Molecule Man ends up trapping her inside a room, away from her family, which becomes super traumatizing. She is helped, at just the right time, by Devil, who gets her supersuit. Her mom, dad, and other family members tearfully depart after she tells them that Moon Girl is who she is, whether they accept or not, right now. Molecule Man tries to defeat her, saying he has nothing to lose, almost akin to what Cassandra sang in *Rapunzel's Tangled Adventure*. She uses her tech to cause him to disappear. She somehow beats him in a near-impossible battle while the music plays.

What happens next almost echoes the tactics of Aang in *Avatar: The Last Airbender* and Steven Universe in the series of the same name. She realizes why he is angry and hurt, realizing that he couldn't protect what he loved and cared for "more than anything," noting it must have been terrifying and painful. While she says she can't mend his pain, she is sorry for what happens. He tells her that it *was* very painful and that his world is shattered. However, a piece of her self-healing suit allows him to be healed. He realizes that he should use his strength to rebuild rather than destroying others. As a measure of goodwill, he rebuilds her house. He plans to return to home planet so he can reconstruct what was lost.

As he departs, she hugs him and he thanks her, specifically for seeing, understanding, and healing. After he leaves, Lunella's dad, grandpa, and grandma are proud of her. At first, her mom seems supportive, calling her the strongest, bravest, and smartest person she has ever met, while wise, compassionate, and kind. She even adds that Lunella is everything a superhero should be. However, she that adds the clincher: that Lunella is *her* daughter and she is *never* being a superhero again. After Lunella hears this, she drops her helmet and is shocked to her core. The family picture even cracks.

This cliffhanger raises many possibilities. The second half of season two, which will consist of ten episodes, could resemble a situation like that in *Hilda*. In that series, Hilda started doing things without telling her mom, resulting in fissures between them (they later reconciled). On the one hand, I understand why Lunella's mother is angry at Lunella. On the other hand, taking away Lunella's ability to be Moon Girl is *cruel*. It could cause her to move out, become rebellious, and/or lie more to her mother, further straining their relationship. At the same time, Lunella might become so depressed she'd stop going to school, hanging out with her friends, and her life will become a shell of nothingness, since her mother totally destroyed her. I personally believe that the latter, rather than the former, will happen. What happens next is up to the writers.

Whether Lunella revealing she is Moon Girl has a parallel to people coming out, or not, I am hopeful there won't a time reversal, amnesia, or deal with the devil. It is more likely that Lunella's mother will realize, over time, the importance of people helping those in danger. As a consequence, she will be forced to re-examine her ideals and biases. I'm not sure that this season is weaker than season one. Instead, I would say it is as good, if not better, than season one. Hopefully the series improves even more from here. I sure hope that Disney executives realize its value and renew it for a third season!

Success of these episodes is dependent on people watching it on streaming services (Disney+). The same is the case for *Hailey's On It!* (which has not yet received a Season 2 renewal), following *The Ghost and Molly McGee* reportedly not getting "enough" views to continue. Additionally, the series remains unavailable worldwide, pressing down its views even more.

Marvel's Moon Girl and Devil Dinosaur | S2 E2 | Full Epis...
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MOON GIRL AND DEVIL DINOSAUR
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The fact that Disney dropped all fourteen episodes of *Moon Girl and Devil Dinosaur* on February 3, on Disney+, does a disservice to the entire series. Luckily, other episodes are in the works and not ready for airing. The model of dropping all episodes of a series on one day implies that executives don't care about creators. This should be changed to dropping 1-2 episodes a week, rather than a huge batch. Considering that each episode is about 23 minutes long, this episode drop would be about 322 minutes, or approximately 5.3 hours at once! This episode drop has led some fans to call for watching all the episodes on one day and bringing awareness to the series.

Looking at other upcoming animated series from the Disney powerhouse implies a crisis. With this series and *Hailey's On It!* having shaky renewal prospects and the ending of *The Ghost and Molly McGee*, the only remaining original animated series on the Disney Channel are for all-ages (*Big City Greens*, *Hamster & Gretel*, and *Kiff*) or kids (*Chibiverse*). It's joined by acquired animations from France (*Gigantosaurus*, *Miraculous: Tales of Ladybug & Cat Noir*, and *Ghost Force*), Australia (*Bluey*), Canada (*Dino Ranch*), and elsewhere (*The Wonderful World of Mickey Mouse*, *Monsters at Work*, *Chip 'n' Dale: Park Life*, and *The Proud Family: Louder and Prouder).*

For Disney+ is isn't much better, with the ending of *Star Wars: The Bad Batch*, unsure renewal of *The Proud Family: Louder and Prouder*, and *Iwájú* only as a six-episode mini-series. That only

leaves two series which have been renewed (*What If...?* and *Monsters at Work)* and another where the renewal is pending (*Chip 'n' Dale: Park Life*).

There's only a handful of upcoming series, with *The Doomies*, *Marvel Zombies*, *Eyes of Wakanda, Duffy and Friends, Win or Lose, Your Friendly Neighborhood Spider-Man,* and *Dragon Striker* scheduled to premiere this year on Disney+ or the Disney Channel. Eight others have unknown premiere dates (*Cookies & Milk*, *Primos, StuGo, Tiana, Magicampers, The Sunnyridge 3*, and *Zombies: The Re-Animated Series)*. While that slate might seem large, when many of these series end this year, it begs the question: what will come after them? Will some of these series move from animated series to films like *Moana 2*?

Despite these issues, Disney has much larger slate than Amazon's Prime Video and Freevee, WarnerDiscovery's Max (many original series have currently ended apart from *Velma*, *Adventure Time: Fionna and Cake*, *Jellystone!*, *Gremlins: Secrets of the Mogwai*, and *Bea's Block*) but competes with Apple TV+ in the number of series offered for kids & family.

There are very few other animated superhero series currently airing, including *My Adventures with Superman*, *X-Men '97*, *Harley Quinn*, *Invincible*, *What If...?*, and *Hit-Monkey*. However, there are more which are upcoming, such as *Iyanu: Child of Wonder*, *Creature Commandos, Kite Man: Hell Yeah!, Legion of Super-Heroes, Bat-Family, Batman: Caped Crusader,* and *Tales of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*. This makes *Moon Girl and Devil Dinosaur* somewhat unique in this regard. Hopefully, episodes are released in a physical format, like DVD or Blu-ray!

Moon Girl and Devil Dinosaur is currently airing on Disney+. Episodes can be purchased on Prime Video.

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